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# “I DON’T THINK WE’VE BEEN FORMALLY INTRODUCED?”

Re-contextualising a Literary Model for First Meetings through Adaptation Theory and Fan Fiction

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# ABSTRACT

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- Title:** “I Don’t Think We’ve Been Formally Introduced?”: Re-contextualising A Literary Model for First Meetings through Adaptation Theory and Fan Fiction.
- Author:** Malin Brus
- Supervisor:** Marius Hentea
- Abstract:** (Re-)contextualising narratology in today’s world of rapid technological development and widespread access to the internet serves as the basis of this essay, which explores what happens when narratology, adaptation theory and fan fiction theory intersect and interact. It combines a surface level quantitative study with qualitative text analysis, using Rousset’s literary model from 1981 on first meetings between lovers-to-be as the narratological reference, and the first meeting between the characters Alec Lightwood and Magnus Bane as the text subject (using a corpus consisting of a novel, its official film and TV-show adaptations, and thirty fan fictions). The study found expected patterns of simplification and short-cuts, in the material studied, as well as partial convergence of fan fictions with Rousset’s model, dependent on the level of compliance of the source adapted. It also found that fan fictions and adaptations generally follow Rousset’s postulated structure of first meetings, with a few notable exceptions regarding the focal points of these scenes.
- Keywords:** narratology, adaptation theory, fan fiction, first meetings, Jean Rousset

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Funny how I feel inside  
When my eyes meet yours  
and your eyes meet mine  
It’s like the snow is melting in my heart  
and I am drowning in the sea of love...  
— *Sharina Saad (2013)*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://hellopoetry.com/poem/364801/when-our-eyes-meet/> [Accessed 20 April 2018]

# INTRODUCTION

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When going on a voyage through time and space on the back of a good story, readers know, and expect, certain key elements of storytelling to appear along the way. “Storytelling is always the art of repeating stories,” to quote Walter Benjamin (Benjamin, qtd in Hutcheon, 2006). Adaptation Theory would agree (cf. Hutcheon, 2006; Friederichsen, 2012). Narratology—a part of literary theory formed around the idea of a common literary language, or a universal pattern of codes that operates within the text or a work<sup>2</sup>—has described numerous literary models since its rise to popularity in the mid-20th century. The first meeting between lovers—that pivotal moment when a connection forms—is one such key scene (Rousset, 1981).

(Re-)contextualising narratology in today’s world of rapid technological development and widespread access to the internet opens up some interesting questions. According to Henry Jenkins (2006), culture—and especially media culture—is converging, with both the media industry and its consumers thus “moving towards a more participatory culture” (p. 177). Defined by Linda Hutcheon (2006) to be product and process at once, adaptations, too, must always be framed in context (p. 142). As that context changes and stories travel through different media, what (if anything) happens with the common literary language? Will we keep revisiting the same stories we always have, only now in digital form (as argued by Hahn Aquila, 2007), or will narrative, like natural selection, modify these stories with each adaptation, as they travel through different media and people (as posited by Hutcheon, 2006)? And finally, when we look at adaptations through the lens of literary models like Rousset’s, will we still find them applicable for stories created in the context of a more participatory culture?

At the nexus of narratology and adaptation theory lies a large body of stories realised in various media and created by online fan communities: fan fiction. Fan fiction builds on existing source media, such as novels, films and TV-shows, to create new media, featuring “characters, settings, concepts, and/or plot elements of the writers’ chosen source texts” (Van Steenhuyse, 2011, p. 2), and is additionally highly immersive and community-driven (e.g. Booth, 2009a, McCain, 2015 and Van Steenhuyse, 2011). Research within this field is still developing, which makes it a particularly interesting area of study. The objective of this essay is to further explore the intersection between narratology, adaptation theory, and fan fiction theory and how the

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<sup>2</sup> Britannica Academic’s definition. Available at: <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/levels/collegiate/article/narratology/125509> [Accessed 6 June 2018]

characteristics of each will interact with and affect each other. To achieve this, I will look at Rousset’s model on first meetings through a body of works consisting of a novel, official adaptations of this novel (film and TV), as well as fan fictions based on the novel and/or its adaptations. The essay will be divided into five main sections: theoretical framework and methodology; analysis of the canonical material (the novel and its official adaptations); analysis of the fan fiction material (thirty fan fictions based on the novel and/or its official adaptations); a critical look at Rousset’s model in the context of online, participatory writing culture (exemplified by the fan fictions studied); and conclusions. Finally, since the intersectional theoretical starting point is already complex, I have chosen to limit the corpus studied to one novel and one scene: the first meeting between the characters Magnus Bane and Alec Lightwood, in Cassandra Clare’s Young Adult novel *City of Bones* (2007).

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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### Narratology: A Theory on First Meetings

Swiss literary critic Jean Rousset’s *Leurs yeux se rencontrèrent: La scène de première vue dans le roman* [*Their Eyes Met: First Meetings in the Novel* <sup>3</sup>] (1981) presents a comprehensive literary model for analysing first meetings between lovers-to-be with an underlying corpus that spans literary works from Antiquity to modern times. It starts from the hypothesis that there exists a “continuous code, resistant to cultural divisions”<sup>4</sup> (p. 8) which governs the key scene that is a first meeting. Rousset talks about the first meeting as a “fundamental situation: the face-to-face that joins our heroes together to form a main couple”<sup>5</sup>, which sets the tone and narrative for that couple going forward.

The action propelled by this scene is different from all others, in the sense that it, more than any other scene, forms a starting point, and determines the course of the story and the development of the characters. The characters most often experience it as a hurricane and a rupture, though sometimes like a slow siege. At least one of them always experiences it as the birth of something, and as a commitment they carry despite themselves. (p. 8)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> All translations of the original text have been done by me, unless otherwise stated.

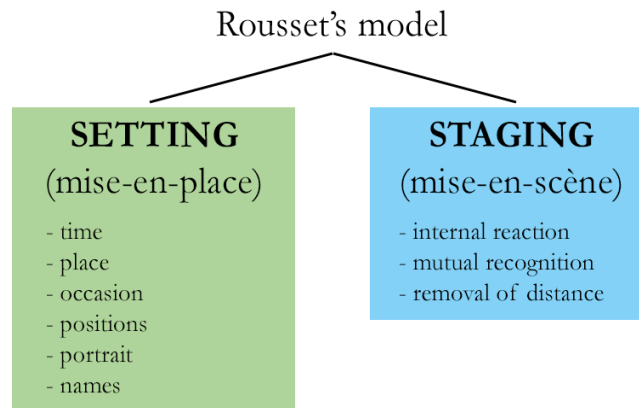
<sup>4</sup> “...la réalité d’un code continu, résistant aux coupures culturelles”

<sup>5</sup> “...une situation fondamentale: le face à face qui joint les héros en couple principal.”

<sup>6</sup> “L’action qu’elle met en oeuvre est différente de toute autre, dans la mesure où, plus qu’une autre, elle pose un commencement et détermine des choix qui retentiront sur l’avenir du récit et sur celui des personnages; ceux-ci la

Rousset argues that the literary patterns that he found converge over both time and cultures, forming a literary archetype (pp. 8-9). He divides his model into two main parts: the **setting** (*mise en place*) and the **staging** (*mise en scène*), in which the setting sets the stage (location, time, the characters’ positions relative to each other, physical descriptions and names), and the staging is concerned with the dynamics which unfold during the scene (internal impact on the character(s), exchanges between them, and the removal of distance between them).

Figure 1: Rousset’s model



My objective is to take Rousset’s literary model beyond the genre of the novel for a comparative literary study: first to a chosen novel and its adaptations, and from there on to the transformative fanworks which surround them. By using a literary model created from a novel corpus (well-known, literary “classics”, with a strong emphasis on Western European 16th to 20th century literature<sup>7</sup>) and applying it in a different literary context (modern adaptations and fan fiction), I hope to visualise how previously observed narratological patterns are affected (if they are at all) when stories are appropriated and re-told by a new community. The choice of Rousset’s highly structural model from 1981—as opposed to later narratological theory—was made in line with this objective: my hope is that the contrast it provides to the fan fiction theory (the majority of which is very contemporary) will help highlight the study’s results.

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subissent le plus souvent comme un ouragan et une rapture, parfois comme un investissement lent; ils éprouvent toujours (du moins l’un d’entre eux) comme une naissance et comme un engagement qui les entraîne malgré eux.”

<sup>7</sup> Rousset uses a largely novel-based corpus to build his model. There is an emphasis on French literary classics, since that is—according to Rousset himself—his primary domain (1981, p. 9). Authors include e.g. Balzac, Chrétien de Troyes, Rabelais, Goethe, Austen, Flaubert and Breton. Rousset also uses some examples from other genres (e.g. opera, theatre, epistolary novels and fairy tales) to complete his corpus.



For this purpose I have chosen the characters Alec Lightwood and Magnus Bane from Cassandra Clare’s 2007 novel *City of Bones*: a same-sex demon hunter/warlock couple. Considering the underlying corpus of Rousset’s model, as well as when he published his work (1981), this might seem like an odd choice. I would argue, however, that there is no reason to believe that the model’s normative origins should preclude its use in a more diverse context. Despite the heteronormative ideologies reflected in Rousset’s examples, his model is fairly gender-neutral, describing the actions and feelings of characters without dividing them into male/female subsets or attributing specific narratological elements to either sex. In addition, fan fictions featuring male/male pairings (often referred to as “slash” pairings, originating from the “/” between the characters’ names) are far more prevalent than fan fictions featuring male/female pairings<sup>8</sup>, signalling that they represent a greater portion of online fan communities. Finally, previous studies have concluded that slash fan fiction—similar to romantic fiction—focuses on the “emotional inner journey of the protagonist” (Leavenworth, 2009, p. 446), and that the “basic characteristics [of slash fan fiction], in relation to historic strategies of representation, have facilitated a certain level of narrative homogeneity” (Kustritz, 2007, p. 61)—two characteristics which ought to make it an interesting fit for Rousset’s model, in my opinion.

## Adaptation Theory And Fan Fiction

In her article “On the Art of Adaptation” (2004), Linda Hutcheon introduces the research project that will later result in her work *A Theory of Adaptations* (2006), arguing that adaptations are “a fundamental operation of story-telling imagination” (p. 111). By her definition, “adaptation” is both **product** and **process**, further defined as:

- An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works
- A creative **and** an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging
- An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work. (ibid, p. 8)

In an act of adaptation, “the story is the common denominator, the core of what is transposed (...) ‘equivalences’ are sought in different sign systems for the various elements of the story: its themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery and so on” (ibid, p. 10). Every adaptation is a “double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (ibid, p. 20), “repetition without replication” (ibid, p. 149), and exists within an “interpretive context that is ideological,

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<sup>8</sup> One example: a search on fan fiction archive Archive of Our Own ([www.archiveofourown.org](http://www.archiveofourown.org)) on Dec 28, 2018, resulted in 2 122 940 works categorised as male/male (out of a total 4 295 630 works), while the corresponding numbers for male/female was 1 078 005, and the one for female/female 357 597.

social, historical, cultural, personal, and aesthetic” (ibid, p. 109). It can be a process of appropriation, in which adaptors take possession of a story and filter it through their own sensibilities (ibid, p. 18). For interactive media and collaborative works, adaptations can form “collective models of creation” with a “web of interlinkages that are constantly being reorganized by the various participants” (ibid, p. 80). Finally, Hutcheon argues that when works are adapted and we experience a work as an adaptation, an ongoing dialogue with the past is formed, creating the double pleasure of what she calls the “palimpsest”: more than one text is experienced, and both texts are experienced in relation to each other (enriching the experience through intertextuality), and through each other (broadening the experience through new contexts and making it more accessible). This creates a unique experience, where the pleasure lies in the “comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise” (ibid, p. 4; 10; 116-117).

What is and is not an adaptation is not always clear-cut. Hutcheon, interestingly, does not consider fan fictions to be adaptations. Her argument is that fan fiction falls in the same category as either prequels and sequels, or as critical commentary, both of which fail to meet the criteria of transforming a text through repetition (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 9; 171). While it is true that a lot of fan fictions work “outside” the original story, rather than transforming it from “within” through repetition (such is the case, for example with codas<sup>9</sup>, pre-canon and post-canon fic<sup>10</sup> and missing scenes<sup>11</sup>, exemplified by Hutcheon (2006), as well as e.g. McCain (2015), Booth (2009b) and Leavenworth (2009)), other fan fiction types fit exceedingly well within Hutcheon’s definition of an adaptation. Such is the case, for example, for alternate universe fan fictions (“AUs”), which are “flexible in their definition (...) [and] may place a favored character in a new setting, for example, outer space or the ancient past (...) [or] simply change the events of the series into a sort of parallel universe of the original” (Hahn Aquila, 2007, p. 39). Previous research in fan studies often places a strong emphasis on the transformative aspects of fan fiction (c.f. Gwenllian Jones, 2004, Booth, 2009b, McCain, 2015, and Van Steenhuyse, 2011) as well as on the collaborative, immersive and quickly changing nature of the fandoms that create it (c.f. Booth (2009a, 2009b) and McCain (2015)). Van Steenhuyse (2011) argues that fan fiction can be especially immersive for the reader, since readers approach fan fiction with highly detailed mental models (schemata) already in place. Readers have the ability to “fill out generic references with specific images” (p. 3), and form their mental models, not only from the source media, but also from expectations that arise from within fandom communities, regarding e.g. world building and characterisation (ibid). “When fans are immersed in fan fiction, they are transported to a universe that confirms a wide range of

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<sup>9</sup> A story of what happens after the events of a particular scene in the original source.

<sup>10</sup> A story in which the plot pre-dates or happens after that in the original source, similar to a prequel or a sequel.

<sup>11</sup> A story that “fills in the blanks” in an existing storyline.

expectations, but also offers them something new” (p. 4). This resonates strongly with Hutcheon’s theory, especially those parts of her theory that regard collective narratives in interactive fiction and collaborative adaptations (c.f. Hutcheon, 2006, p. 80; 136).

Perhaps the perceived conflict is to be found in how narrow a definition of “fan fiction” each researcher chooses to adopt, rather than in their definition of what constitutes an adaptation or a transformative work. After all, Keller (2015) defines fan fiction simply as “any work of fiction that is derived from another author’s original work,” while Hutcheon (2006) groups it with “prequels and sequels” and Pugh (2005) splits it into two primary groups: stories that give the reader more **of** a text and those that give them more **from** a text. Pugh’s distinction, in my opinion, eliminates the question of adaptation-or-not rather neatly by recognising that fan fiction can take many different forms (c.f. Friedrichsen’s summary of Jenkin’s findings<sup>12</sup>), some of which fall into the area of adaptation. Another variable that should be taken into account is time: fandom—and with it, fan fiction—has changed substantially since the initial publication of Hutcheon’s *A Theory of Adaptation* in 2006.

## A Preliminary Hypothesis

When looking at a corpus which includes multiple renditions of the same moment—by different creators and in different media—what can we reasonably expect as a result of a comparative analysis? The rendition of one specific canonical moment in various derivative works is, in my opinion, a clear case of the type of repetition with the (presumed) change which Hutcheon holds at the core of her adaptation definition. From an adaptation theory standpoint, it seems reasonable to expect a rather large variance in how the first-meeting scene is presented, especially taking into account the strong immersive qualities of fan fiction. Further, “short cuts” with regards to application of the literary model are to be expected, since adaptations rely on the person experiencing them to be able to fill in gaps with information from the original source when needed (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 121). On the other hand, if the universal convergence of first-meetings scenes which Rousset depicts in *First Meetings* is as strong as he claims, it might negate some of the adaptation process’ effect. I believe that a key element in this tug of war between narratology and adaptation theory will be the fan element. The fan fiction writer’s job is, according to Booth, “to fill in the ‘gaps’ they perceive in the extant narrative, to complete a job, or finish a task left unfinished by media producers” (2009b, p. 39). I believe that

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<sup>12</sup> “Jenkins lists several overlapping types of fanfiction: contextualizing an unexplained moment in the text, expansion of the text’s timeline, re-focalization on minor characters, moral realignment, genre shifting, crossovers, character dislocation, personalization, emotional intensification, and eroticization (162-184).” (Friedrichsen, 2012, p. 79)

this aspect will help converge the corpus back towards Rousset’s model—especially where the adapted source itself is less compliant—and perhaps also help modernise it by lending a sharper focus to what elements of a first meeting truly shape the heart of a story.

## CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

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*City of Bones* (2007) is a young adult (YA) novel written by author Cassandra Clare. It tells the story of Clary Fray, who, on her sixteenth birthday, discovers that she is part of a supernatural angel-human hybrid race called Shadowhunters, whose mission it is to combat demons on earth. The novel is the first part of a series, and was first adapted into a movie (*The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*) in 2013, and then as the TV-show *Shadowhunters: The Mortal Instruments* in 2016. Two of the side-characters in the novel are shadowhunter Alec Lightwood and warlock Magnus Bane whose relationship (bearing the portmanteau “Malec”) quickly became a fan favourite, in spite of not being heavily featured in the novel (White, 2016). Since then, Malec’s popularity has only grown, to the point of being many times more popular than the novel’s “main” pairing (Clary Fray/Jace Wayland)<sup>13</sup>. The adaptations have progressed the same way, giving the Malec pairing more and more screen time—which is particularly true for the TV show adaptation, where Magnus and Alec are both listed as main characters<sup>14</sup>, and their relationship is frequently used to promote the show<sup>15</sup>.

### Corpus Selection

Van Steenhuyse argues that “the best fan writers fulfil a number of ‘expectations that have already been established intertextually,’ but also manage to ‘transform community-held expectations’” (2011, p. 5). This would suggest that fan fictions that manage to find a good balance between fulfilling the reader’s expectations of canon and transforming aspects of that canon into something new—i.e. that adhere to Hutcheon’s adaptation definition—become the most successful. Based on this assumption, I have chosen the corpus of texts for this study based on popularity, using works posted on one of the largest fan archives: Archive of

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<sup>13</sup> One indicator of a pairing’s popularity may be the amount of fan fiction entries found online centering on the particular pairing. In June 2018, the fan fiction archive AO3 ([www.archiveofourown.org](http://www.archiveofourown.org)) showed 2276 stories tagged with Clary Fray/Jace Wayland, while the corresponding number for Magnus Bane/Alec Lightwood was 15729. (1813 of the Clary Fray/Jace Wayland stories additionally carried both tags, and for the majority of them Magnus Bane/Alec Lightwood was first in the list of tags, indicating them to be the actual main pairing of the story).

<sup>14</sup> List of characters taken from Wikipedia entry. Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadowhunters#Main> [Accessed 2019-01-04]

<sup>15</sup> One example: episode 12 of season one, where Alec and Malec have their first kiss, is titled “Malec”. See also: White, 2016.

Our Own (AO3). The AO3 filtering system contains several indicators of a fic’s (relative) popularity (“hits”, “kudos”, “comments” and “bookmarks”). Each has its own strengths and weaknesses for measuring a work’s popularity.<sup>16</sup> I chose to use *kudos* as my indicator of a fic’s popularity because it has all data available and is the least ambiguous in terms of the number of individual reader interactions. Since I aim to compare both the original novel with its official adaptations (film and TV-show), as well as fan fictions for each, I adapted the search filter and ran three separate searches to get the most popular works in each category (book-based, film-based, TV-show-based). When adding the top ten from each search to the corpus, a manual check was made to ensure that the corpus would be relevant to the theory studied and reasonably well-balanced in terms of creators. This check discarded works that a) did not contain a first meeting (e.g. stories set within the canon, after the characters Magnus and Alec already know each other), b) were by an author who already had another story in the corpus, or c) were already selected in another category. Once a work was discarded, the selection process moved on to the next story in the list, until ten works had been selected for each category<sup>17</sup>.

Table 1: Corpus summary

N = 33

Official novel (1)	Official movie adaptation (1)	Official TV-show adaptation (1)
Novel-based fan fictions (10)	Movie-based fan fictions (10)	TV-show-based fan fictions (10)
<i>Novel category total: 11</i>	<i>Movie category total: 11</i>	<i>TV-show category total: 11</i>

## Method Selection

I have chosen a mixed approach for my analysis. First, I will evaluate the corpus’ compliance with Rousset’s model quantitatively, using a matrix to note compliance with important elements<sup>18</sup>. Since the corpus in question is very small, I will then move on to a qualitative analysis, aiming to nuance the high level picture

<sup>16</sup> *Hits* accumulate favourably for chaptered works that are posted in multiple installments (WIPs), compared to works that are posted all at once, and only provide information of how many times a work has been shown—not by how many readers or whether the readers liked it; *kudos* is a subjective measure of reader enjoyment, and steeped in some controversy (longlivefeedback, 2018a); *comments*, like *hits*, give no indication of whether the reader enjoyed the work or not (though it’s considered rude within most fandoms to give negative feedback unless directly asked)(longlivefeedback, 2018b), nor any indication of what proportion of the comments are from readers, and how many (if any) are the author’s response to those comments; finally, *bookmarks* come in two versions—private and public—where only public bookmarks show up in search results.

<sup>17</sup> For full details on corpus selection, please see the appendix.

<sup>18</sup> For full details on matrix makeup, as well as the full results of the corpus evaluation, please see the appendix.

and apparent trends taken from the first step. The aim is for the two methods to complement each other—using the first to narrow and focus the scope of the second—to increase the richness and relevance of the results.

## Matrix for Evaluating Rousset’s Model

For the high-level analysis of the corpus, I will use a matrix to evaluate compliance of each source with Rousset’s model on first meetings. Three main areas will form the matrix: compliance with the “setting” and “staging” elements, as modelled by Rousset (1981 pp. 41-49), as well as a marker for whether the first meeting portrayed happens in succession or is broken up into different parts.

The “setting” part of the matrix evaluates the context of the first meeting—the when and wheres—as well as introductory elements (physical descriptions and character names). This is where, according to Rousset, several highly codified elements appear, such as future lovers often meeting at a special occasion (e.g. a ceremony or a party), in the presence of a crowd, or at a symbolic crossroads. It normally involves a portrait<sup>19</sup>, as well as the characters learning each other’s names (pp. 41-42).

The “staging” part delves deeper into the narrative, and it is here that, according to Rousset, the trajectory of the coming love story is determined<sup>20</sup>. Structured by Rousset into three parts (“*effet*”, “*échange*”, “*franchissement*”), it progresses in three steps: an internal reaction in the point of view character(s) as they lay eyes on their future beloved (often described as something strong, often violent, and fundamentally changing); an internal/external reaction that takes place when they first mutually recognise each other (attempting to read and/or communicate with the other character through eye contact, body language etc); and finally an external step, consisting of a (usually literal) traversal of the distance between the characters (e.g. speaking to each other, touching, moving into the same space)(pp. 42-46).

Finally, I have added a marker for whether the first meeting happens all within one scene. Common variations is e.g. split-scene structures where one character sees the other and experiences the internal reaction (“*effet*”) before there is mutual recognition (“*échange*”)<sup>21</sup>, or where the final stage (“*franchissement*”) happens at a later time. Rousset theorises that meeting in several stages signals that the process of the developing

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<sup>19</sup> A physical description following a traditional schema, e.g. going top-down or bottom-up, or from a detail (such as the eyes) outward.

<sup>20</sup> “elles [les lignes qui décrivent un premier rencontre] constituent une scène-clé, à laquelle se suspend la chaîne narrative.” (p. 7)

<sup>21</sup> Common examples, according to Rousset, include dreams, portraits and seeing the other from afar/while being hidden from view (p. 64).

relationship will be imbalanced or out of synch for the characters (p. 56)<sup>22</sup>. This strikes me as a potential key element for when it comes to analysing the adaptation aspects of each scene (and even more so, the fan element).

## ANALYSIS

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### The Novel and Its Official Adaptations

Magnus and Alec’s first meeting in Clare’s novel happens almost entirely off-page. The scene during which it takes place is told from the main character Clary’s point of view, and focuses on her own storyline, rather than Alec or Magnus’. The setting can still be evaluated analogically, by using Clary as a proxy for Alec’s point of view. This tells us that Alec and Magnus have a rather typical first meeting from a narratological standpoint with regard to the setting elements: they meet at night, in public, in the context of a celebration, the narrative includes a portrait of Magnus, and Alec learns his name. When it comes to the staging, however, the evaluation is more difficult. We see nothing of either Alec or Magnus’ initial reactions from their own point of view. Clary notes that Alec grows more animated as the meeting goes on, and he’s described to blush and stutter in Magnus’ presence (indicating the presence of *effet*). We see them exchange a few lines of dialogue (*franchissement*), and at the end of the meeting, Magnus gives Alec a wink (*échange*) and asks him to call him. Since the first meeting happens in the background, it fades in and out of the main narrative, as Clary glimpses moments of it. Alec’s first view of Magnus appears through Clary’s point of view:

The young man blocking the doorway was tall and thin as a rail, his hair a crown of dense black spikes. He was Asian, with an elegantly high-cheekboned, handsome face, broad-shouldered despite his slim frame. He was certainly dressed for a party, in tight jeans and a black shirt covered with dozens of metal buckles. His eyes were crusted with a raccoon mask of charcoal glitter, his lips tainted a dark shade of blue. (Clare, 2007, p. 234)<sup>23</sup>

The first time they speak to each other, as well as where the first signs of their reaction to, and impact on each other appear comes a few pages later:

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<sup>22</sup> E.g. one character falls in love before the other one does, one character wants the relationship to move faster than the other one does, etc.

<sup>23</sup> All quotes from the material studied (Clare’s novel and fan fiction corpus) have been taken unaltered and copied directly from the original source, unless otherwise stated. Any grammar or spelling mistakes are true to the original. Any emphasis in the text is also true to the original, unless otherwise stated.

Jace whistled under his breath. "That [throwing out a vampire] was impressive."

"You mean that little hissy fit?" Magnus cast his eyes toward the ceiling. "I know. What is her problem?"

Alec made a choking noise. After a moment Clary recognized it as laughter. *He ought to do that more often.*

"We put the holy water in his gas tank, you know," he said.

"ALEC," said Jace. "Shut up."

"I assumed that," said Magnus, looking amused. "Vindictive little bastards, aren't you? You know their bikes run on demon energies. I doubt he'll be able to repair it."

"One less leech with a fancy ride," said Jace. "My heart bleeds."

"I heard some of them can make their bikes fly," put in Alec, who looked animated for once. He was almost smiling.

"Merely an old warlock's tale," said Magnus, his cat's eyes glittering. (Clare, 2007, pp. 239-40)

There are a couple of instances after this where Alec adds a sentence to the conversation that Clary and Magnus are having, or where Magnus directly addresses him, but their reactions stay mostly uncommented on until the end of the scene:

"I'd say it was a pleasure to meet you, but it wasn't. [Magnus said] Not that you aren't all fairly charming, and as for you—" He dropped a glittery wink at Alec, who looked astounded. "Call me?"

Alec blushed and stuttered and probably would have stood there all night if Jace hadn't grasped his elbow and hauled him toward the door, Isabelle at their heels. (Clare, 2007, p. 260 )

When evaluated for compliance with Rousset's model, the novel scores high on setting (100%), and much lower for the staging elements (22%), partly due to the lack of direct access to the characters' thoughts and internal reactions. Taking the lack of on-page content into consideration, this result is fairly unsurprising; Rousset's model, after all, is based on the first meeting between *main* characters, and this is simply not the case with Alec and Magnus in Clare's novel and their status as side characters (the resulting relationship between the two—like their first meeting—happens mostly off-page). What the novel manages to do, however, is leave Alec and Magnus' first meeting wide open to interpretation, resulting in a good source for creative acts of appropriation/salvaging, per Hutcheon's theory (2006).



Moving on to the official adaptations, we note that both the film and the TV-show neatly illustrate the “repetition without replication” argument from Hutcheon’s research. Alec and Magnus’ first meeting in the film (*The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*, 2013) translates and condenses the scene from the novel, creating the type of ongoing dialogue with the past which Hutcheon describes in her work. It reuses most of the setting elements from the novel, as well as some of the novel’s dialogue, while allowing the point of view to expand past Clary. While still brief, the film version refocuses the scene of Alec and Magnus’ first meeting on the characters themselves, e.g. by choosing camera angles which centre on the characters’ reactions and exclude the other characters in the room. It also broadens it by integrating information from other parts of the novel (e.g. a comment Magnus makes about the colour of Alec’s eyes), exemplifying Hutcheon’s dual definition of adaptation being both process and product. When evaluated for compliance with Rousset’s model, the film adaptation scores the same as the novel for setting (100%), but significantly higher than the novel for the staging elements (56%). This increase in compliance correlates rather neatly with the increased prominence that Alec and Magnus’ first meeting is given in the film. While still brief and between secondary characters (Alec and Magnus’ relationship in the film, like in the novel, remains mostly off-screen), the meeting itself is shown directly to the viewer, instead of being filtered through another character’s point of view. As described in Hutcheon’s work, the act of appropriation/salvaging here creates greater accessibility, where the viewer (through e.g. facial expressions, body language and dialogue) gains a better understanding of how the first meeting impacts, and is experienced by, the characters who form the couple in question.

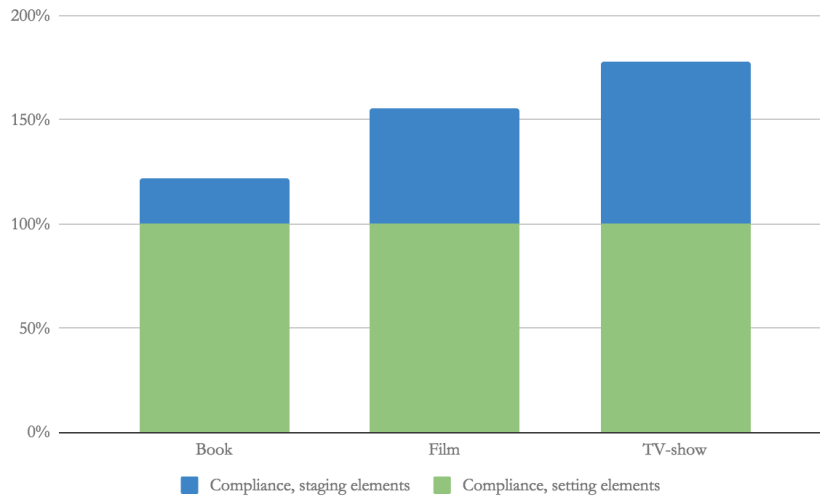
The TV-show adaptation takes the scene yet another step further. With Alec and Magnus having been elevated from side characters to main characters for the show<sup>24</sup>, their first meeting has been given more on-screen time as well. Instead of happening briefly in the background of another scene, it builds over the course of a full episode, and includes two mirroring scenes where one of them sees the other without being seen, followed by a mutual first meeting (*Shadowhunters: The Mortal Instruments*, 2016, season 1, ep. 4). The setting for the first two—in large spaces, in the presence of others, with full body portraits—contrasts with the third, which is set in a smaller space, in private (except for a dead enemy), with the camera focused on their faces. The initial reactions for each character occur twice, and move in counterpoint with one another: Alec’s first reaction to Magnus is focused and calm, while Magnus’ is one of surprise/shock; Alec’s second reaction includes stuttering and a background soundtrack of a racing heartbeat, while Magnus’ is more focused. Compliance-wise, the TV-show’s version of Alec and Magnus’ first meeting scores the highest out of the three official sources (100% for setting, 78% for staging). Additionally, there is an argument to be made

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<sup>24</sup> The TV-show adaptation lists seven main characters for season one, out of which Alec and Magnus are two (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadowhunters>).

that the first meeting, in fact, continues into the next few scenes—in which case the TV-show adaptation would score 100% for compliance with the staging elements of Rousset’s model as well.

Figure 2: Evaluation of Rousset’s model, novel and official adaptations



When comparing the novel and its official adaptations side by side, we see a clear increase in compliance with Rousset’s model when we move from the novel to the film, and then again when moving to the TV-show. It is interesting to note that the difference here is seen only in the staging elements, and that compliance with the setting elements is very high, even when the scene in question happens mostly off-page. When looking at the model from an analytical point of view, this makes sense, however: the setting elements are objective in nature, and can be communicated to a reader or viewer through any narrator present; the staging elements, on the other hand, are subjective and require a deeper look into the characters who are meeting for the first time.

A last thing to take note of is the structure of each scene, and whether it can be seen as a mirror to the overall progression of the relationship it launches, as argued by Rousset. It is difficult to say whether the novel and the film support this theory, since both Alec and Magnus’ first meeting and relationship are very briefly shown, or not shown at all. The TV-show, on the other hand, seems to support Rousset’s theory: Magnus’ and Alec’s relationship development in the series carries a similar back-and-forth dynamic as the one we find in the progression of how they meet.

In conclusion, we can see that, as the characters move through adaptations from being side characters to having a more prominent status, the description of their first meeting converges towards Rousset’s model.

## Fan Fiction: Diversity and Convergence

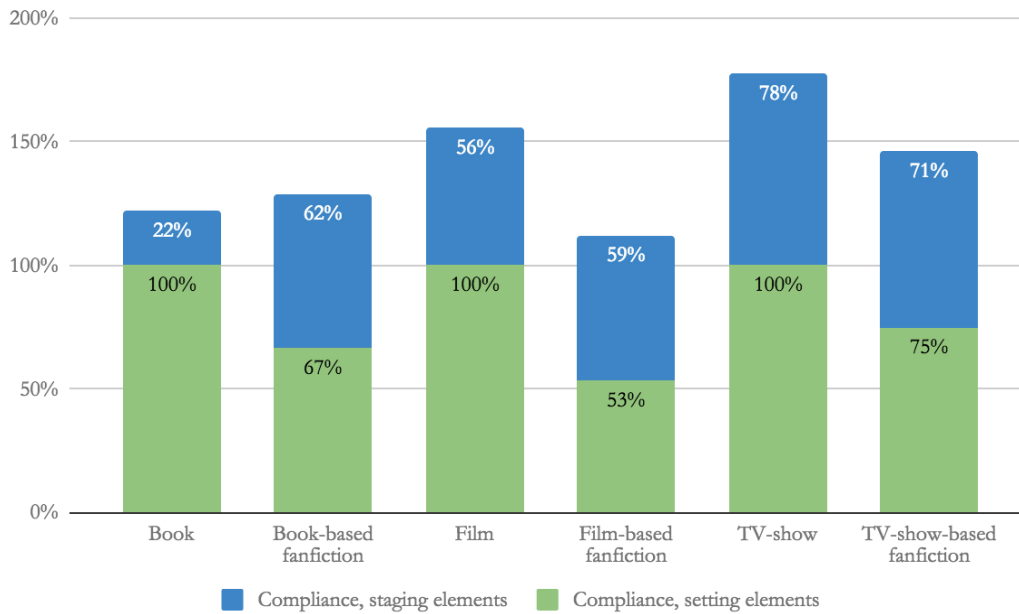
Taking the theoretical framework and superimposing it on a fan fiction corpus, I expected to see quite a bit of variance in how Magnus’ and Alec’s first meeting is portrayed. When examining the texts, however, we find that there is actually very little variation in the setting elements of the first meeting between fan fiction sub-groups (novel-based fan fiction, film-based fanfiction and TV-show-based fan fiction). Instead, we see variance occurring at a “higher” level of the story; e.g. the different universes chosen for the overarching setting. Within a corpus of just thirty fan fictions, the reader gets to experience everything from a corporate setting (e.g. Ketz’s “I Want to Root Your System” and KouriArashi’s “Set Fire to A Stone”) to shapeshifting dragons (e.g. Qoe\_Indominus’ “Can I Keep You?”) to retellings of the first meeting in the novel, from another character’s point of view (e.g. Siavahda’s “City of Shadows”) to professional hockey players (e.g. Otppurefuckingmagic’s “In the Sin Bin”) and ghosts (e.g. Rena’s “The Boy in the Mirror”). As different as the premises of these stories appear, however, we find that the first meetings between our characters play out in a similar manner:

The man looked up and his eyes took a second to focus, but when they did, Magnus felt himself being undressed by that gaze. It was a really nice feeling. “Magnus, hi.” The man stood up, standing almost a head over him as he offered a hand in greeting. “I’m Alec.” (Ketz, 2016)

Magnus had to be used to people staring at him with their jaws ajar, because he didn’t seem bothered. “Good afternoon. Magnus Bane, here for a two o’clock appointment.” (...) Even his voice was amazing, light and musical. It settled in Alec’s bones and refused to leave, which was probably why his response was just a stammered, “Uh, I, Alec.” (KouriArashi, 2016)

When comparing the different sub-groups of fan fiction, both with each other and with their immediate source, we note that the variance in compliance with Rousset’s model is fairly evenly distributed between the setting and staging elements, in contrast to what we found for the novel and its adaptations (where compliance differed only in regards to the staging elements).

Figure 3: Evaluation of Rousset’s model, fan fiction vs. official sources



As shown in Figure 3, there is a markedly lower level of compliance with the setting elements of Rousset’s model in the fan fictions studied than what we found in the novel or its official adaptations, and the setting elements that are included are, in addition, generally less descriptive than those in the works they reference. This is very much in line with Van Steenheuyse’s theories on existing schemata within fandom communities, illustrating both how a specific element (e.g. a physical description) can be condensed or summarised in an adaption thanks to the adaptation’s continuous dialogue with the work which inspired it (also supported by Hutcheon, 2006). The clearest example of this is most likely the portrait element: the novel and the official adaptations all provide full-body portraits through either written description or visual images, which include build and dress, as well as specific features; most of the fan works, by contrast, focus on a few, specific elements (e.g. eyes, hair, height and makeup/style), or overall features that interpret the characters’ appearance and introduce the effect one character has on the other (attractiveness, beauty) rather than simply providing information. Based on the corpus studied, it appears that the portrait element in fan adaptations takes on a highly codified form which responds to the expectations of the community that consumes them (cf. Van Steenheuyse, 2011 and McCain, 2015)—almost to the point of being comparable to the set physical attributes of *commedia dell’arte*-type stock characters. For portraits of Alec, the traits described most often are

his dark hair, his build and his eyes. For portraits of Magnus, the corresponding traits are his hairstyle, eyes and his clothes or makeup.

He was **beautiful**. He was **tall**, taller than Alec; **his eyes were electrifying, his winged eyeliner** so sharp that Isabelle would be jealous. (Punkbean, 2006, emphasis added)

But the person who caught Alec's full attention was the **glittery** boy next to them. Alec guessed from his features he could see behind his **make-up** that he was part Asian, even though he was as white as the others. The boy wore a **rainbow-coloured shirt with a deep neckline and jeans that hung low on his hips, his black hair was covered in a layer of glitter and stood up in spikes**. He was perhaps a bit **taller** than Alec which almost never happened. (Underthespellofmalec, 2018, emphasis added)

The warlock looks **dangerous**. **Dark hair is styled high, a deep maroon shirt buttoned to his throat with necklaces down to his navel, extensive numbers of rings on his fingers, and black eye make-up lines gold-green cat eyes**. (Notcrypticbutcoy, 2017, emphasis added)

Since the physical descriptions of the two characters differ between the novel and its adaptations (because of the actors chosen) the highly codified descriptions in fan fiction also serve to distinguish which sub-part of the fandom a certain work belongs to, and what source material it references. A blue-eyed Alec, for example, would reference the novel or the film, whereas a hazel-eyed Alec would reference the TV-show. By knowing which of the official source materials has been adapted, the double pleasure of Hutcheon’s palimpsest can be more easily obtained—all while sharing and collaborating in the creation of this phenomenon with others in the fandom community (Booth, 2009a). Similar codification can be observed in other elements: a first meeting where the characters both learn each other’s names by introducing themselves, for example, normally links the fan fiction to the TV-show adaptation; a meeting at a birthday party thrown in honour of Magnus’ cat instead forges a connection with the novel. The same goes for the way fan fiction re-uses lines of dialogue from the source it adapts, which can serve both to create familiarity by making callbacks to the original (c.f. Hutcheon, 2006, McCain, 2015), but also to set a certain line of dialogue in a different context, thereby transforming its use:

Magnus plucked the invitation out of her hand and looked at it with fastidious distaste. **“I must have been drunk,”** he said. He threw the door open. **“Come in. And try not to murder any of my guests.”** (Clare, 2007, p. 235, emphasis added)

Magnus blinks at the invitation. **“I must've been drunk,”** he mumbles, not to anyone in particular. He looks up, surveying their strange group. **“Come in. And try not to murder any of my guests.”**

Alec freezes, his attention abruptly consumed by this warlock. He can't help the small gasp.

Magnus raises an eyebrow at him. “All right?”

Alec nods furiously, avoiding looking at Jace and Izzy, who are both staring at him. (Someone\_aka\_me, 2015, emphasis added)

The second excerpt takes Magnus’ lines from Clare’s novel and uses them to transform the impact of the scene. In the original, we see nothing of Alec’s reaction to Magnus’ words, as the scene is written from Clary’s point of view, and Alec remains in the background. In the fan fiction adaptation, Someone\_aka\_me uses the same lines to forge a connection between Alec and Magnus, both figuratively (putting both characters in the same scene and having them react to and impact each other) and literally (this particular piece of fan fiction introduces an alternative plotline in which Magnus’s words activate a soulbond between them, as they match a pre-existing soulmark imprinted on Alec’s skin). In adapting the scene of Alec and Magnus’ first meeting, the fan author hereby appropriates it (Hutcheon, 2016), “fills the gap” left by the original author (Booth, 2009b) and creates a “transformed version of the universe of and in the primary text” (Van Steenhuyse, 2011).

Differences between the fan fiction sub-groups, on the other hand, are noticeable primarily with regards to staging elements and structure. These are similar to the different “versions” of the portrait element that we observed in the analysis of the setting elements: fan fiction within each sub-category seem to cluster together, each putting a slightly different emphasis on Alec and Magnus’ first meeting. Fan fictions citing the novel or the film as their primary source of inspiration tend to use all three elements of mutual recognition (eye contact, facial cues and body language) to convey the connection forming between the characters, as seen, for example, in Finkishnets’ novel-based story “Only by Chance” (emphasis added):

Alec tries not to **smile** at the jealousy in his voice but Doctor Bane **catches his eye** and he can’t help it, **ducking his head**.

By contrast, fan fictions based on the TV-show tend to be skewed towards using a combination of eye contact and facial cues only (where the facial element is nearly always a smile), as seen in Lemonoclefox’s story “Set Me in Motion” (emphasis added):

Then he **glances at Magnus**, and Magnus looks away. (...) He gives the man a **small, polite smile**, but says nothing, and both of them go back to staring at the closed elevator doors.

Another example where the sub-groups diverge is touch: fan fiction based on the TV-show includes touch almost twice as frequently as fan fiction based on the novel or the film. Interestingly, this touch most often comes in the form of a handshake as they introduce themselves—a detail not present in the TV-show itself, where the first touch between Alec and Magnus is a hand-hold during a demon summoning ritual (*Shadowhunters: The Mortal Instruments*, 2016, ep. 4).

Going deeper into the structure of the presented narratives, it is interesting to note that the fan fiction based on the film breaks up the initial meeting to a higher degree than other fan fiction, which would mean that the ensuing relationship will progress out of synch for the characters according to Rousset’s model (1981). The film adaptation has already expanded upon the original meeting from the book, and it makes sense that fan fiction based on this scene would continue the transformative aspects of adaptation, adding additional complexity to the relationship as it adapts from the first, simple sketch given in the canonical first meeting (McCain, 2015). When contrasting the film with the TV-show and its accompanying fan fictions, however, the opposite pattern appears. The TV-show is the only official adaptation to break up the first meeting of these two characters into multiple scenes, which is mirrored by the higher degree of complexity with which their relationship is handled throughout the rest of the adaptation. For fan fiction based on the TV-show, however, only 20% of works contain a first meeting broken up into multiple parts (contrasted with 30% for fan fiction based on the book and 60% for fan fiction based on the film).

This might be explained by Booth’s (2009b) definition of fan fiction as something that “fills in the gaps”. In the case of the TV show, one might argue that the official adaptation has already done the job of filling in the gaps and adding degrees of complexity to the characters. Fan fiction based on the TV-show can thus focus on what is on-screen (instead of imagining what happens off-page or off-screen), which potentially removes some of the need for additional complexity as the story progresses. Referring back to Figure 3, we find additional evidence of Booth’s theory: the fan fiction based on the novel has a much higher compliance with Rousset’s model than the novel itself when it comes to the more character-centric staging elements (62% vs. 22%)—the corresponding values for film-based fan fiction vs. film and TV-show based fan fiction vs. TV-show are 59% vs. 56% and 71% vs. 78%, respectively. This seems to indicate that fan fictions based on less compliant sources converge the scene of the first meeting back towards Rousset’s model to a greater extent than fan fictions based on more compliant sources do.

In conclusion, McCain’s argument that, “contemporary fic writing is a very fine balance between producing something new and giving readers the familiarity that they’ve turned to fic for in the first place,” (2015, p. 71) appears to hold true for the corpus studied. There is great diversity when it comes to the overall settings and

plots, but when looking at the corpus from a narratological point of view, we see both high compliance with Rousset’s model on first meetings, and strong similarities between how Alec and Magnus’ first meeting is portrayed. This is especially true within each sub-group of fan fiction, where we observe highly codified elements, which serve to place each story in the context of a specific version of the story referenced—highly similar to the communal re-reading of narratives Booth describes in his article on “narrativity” (2009a). We further note that Booth’s argument that fan fiction writers strive to “fill in the gaps” and “finish a task left unfinished” (Booth, 2009b) is supported by the results from our corpus, which shows greater convergence towards Rousset’s model for less compliant sources.

## Moving beyond Rousset’s Model

Thus far, I have taken Rousset’s model at face value for the purpose of my analysis. In order to nuance the findings from that analysis, I would now like to take a step back and consider the final questions introduced at the start of this study: When we look at adaptations through the lens of literary models like Rousset’s, will we still find them applicable for stories created in the context of a more participatory culture, such as fan fiction? And when we look at models like Rousset’s through the lens of adaptation and fan fiction, will we see them in a new light?

When summarising his model, Rousset (1981) emphasises two main aspects of a first meeting from a narratological perspective: its structural use, forming a starting point and acting as a predictor for the story to come; and its storytelling use, propelling the character(s) into a new situation, irrevocably changing them in the process.

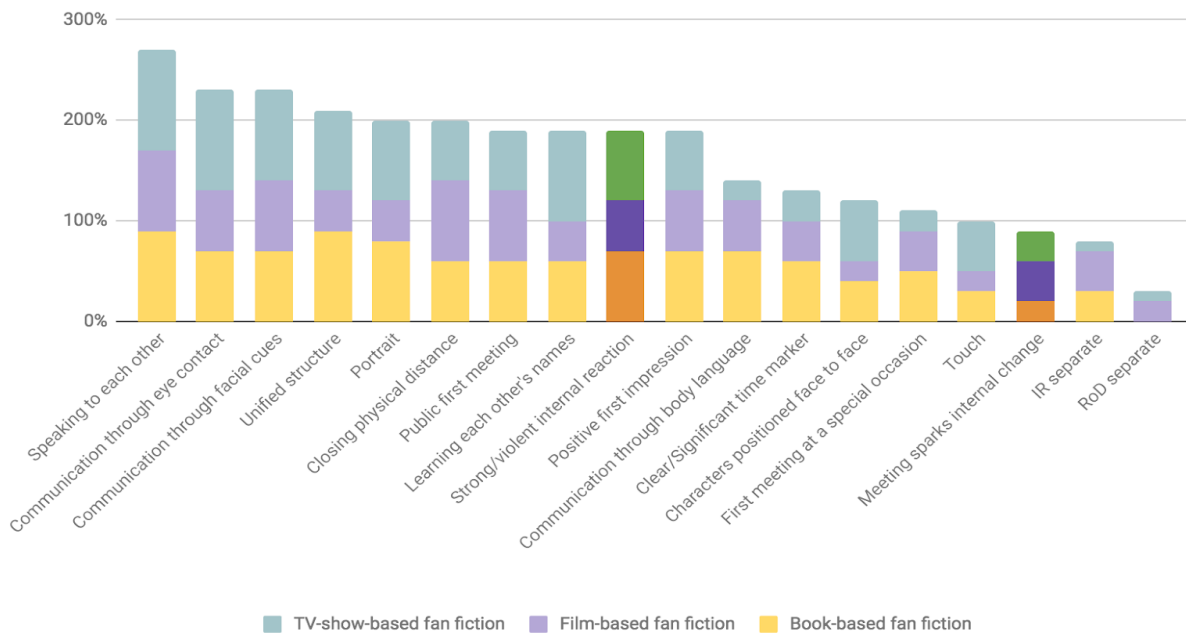
It [the first meeting scene] (...) forms a starting point, and determines the course of the story and the development of the characters. The characters most often experience it as a hurricane and a rupture, though sometimes like a slow siege. At least one of them always experience it as the birth of something, and as a commitment they carry despite themselves. (p. 8)

When stripped down to essentials in this way, an evaluation of the fan fiction parts of our corpus yields somewhat different results than when scored against the full model. Looking at how Rousset’s key elements per his own summary—a strong internal reaction and the meeting sparking internal change—appear in our fan fiction corpus, we find them at the middle to lower end of the compliance scale, far beneath elements such as the characters speaking to each other or communicating silently via eye contact or social cues. The novel and its official adaptations follow a similar pattern, with the TV-show being the only out of the three to



explicitly characterise Alec and Magnus’ first meeting both as the birth of something new<sup>25</sup> and as a commitment they carry despite themselves<sup>26</sup>, though both elements appear outside of the scene of their first meeting.

Figure 4: Fan fiction compliance breakdown



Some of this discrepancy can likely be attributed to the small size and the selection method of our corpus. Even with the limited size of ten fan fictions per sub-category, finding enough fan fictions that fulfilled the selection criteria was a challenge, especially for film-based fan fiction, thereby rendering Van Steenhuyse’s theory on popular fan fiction being more conforming to set community expectations (and by extension, to overreaching narratological models) than less popular fan fiction somewhat irrelevant. In addition, given how online fandom is spread out and fragmented across multiple platforms, Kustritz (2007) argues that “truly representative sampling is practically impossible” (p. 11), which, in turn, means that generalising any conclusions that are drawn via a narrow study such as ours towards a larger fandom context is difficult in and of itself.

<sup>25</sup> “You’ve unlocked something in me.” (Magnus to Alec in *Shadowhunters: The Mortal Instruments*, 2016, season 1, ep. 6)

<sup>26</sup> “Then someone comes along and pushes you off that path [the one you have set out for yourself]. (...) And if you get knocked off the path, you have to focus, and find your way back.” (Alec to Jace in *Shadowhunters: The Mortal Instruments*, 2016, season 1, ep. 12)

When studying the data we do have, however, we can nevertheless observe certain patterns and theorise about them from the context of previous, larger studies done on fan fiction and fan communities. Looking at the fan fictions in our corpus, we note that the kind of internal change Rousset puts forward in his theory does occur in the works studied, but to a quite small extent (30%) and often within specific story contexts, such as a soulbond<sup>27</sup> or alpha/omega<sup>28</sup> settings, which feature a certain amount of predetermination.

When he finally reached the boy, Magnus took in his youthful face with the flushed cheeks and big blue eyes that seemed to have all the colours of the sea and **thought that this kid would be his salvation or destruction.** (orphan\_account<sup>29</sup>, 2016, emphasis added)

A few minutes of staring at each other (or what had seems like hours). Alec dared to look down his wrist again. **And there on his wrist, written in elegant cursive was a name.**

“Magnus Bane...?” He whispers as he looks up.

All of the sudden, Magnus forgot how to breathe.

And, just like the latter, **he looked at his wrist; written in the same way was a name.**

“Alexander Lightwood.” Magnus says in a voice with a hint of seduction. When Alec's eyes widens, Magnus' lips formed a grin.

“Finally, after 800 years. You’re finally here.” (punkbean, 2016, emphasis added)

Instead of emphasising the first meeting being life-changing, the fan fictions in our corpus tend to particularly feature the connection formed between the characters (e.g. eye contact and facial cues) and the removal of distance between them (e.g. through speech). In Rousset’s model, these elements appear rather as effects of the internal reaction, which is the pivotal point, than as focal points in and of themselves. Put in context with the “short-cuts” vis-a-vis the model that we observed earlier in this study, it seems reasonable to theorise that the schemata shared within fandom communities have an impact here as well. Kustritz argues that fan fiction allows for a strong element of utopian thinking (2016). This, in combination with McCain’s observation that fans are “building off one another’s stories, and identifying pieces of knowledge (texts, facts, theories) that are (generally) agreed upon by the whole community” (2015, p. 5), and Hutcheon’s theories on the double pleasure of the palimpsest, could be used to argue that fan fiction, by its nature, has less need for literary rigidity than original fiction, because key parts of the story are pre-determined. The way Rousset’s model is

<sup>27</sup> A plot structure where two characters’ souls are literally bound together, e.g. being born with the first words their soulmate will say to them, or the date they will meet, imprinted upon their skin.

<sup>28</sup> A plot structure similar to that of characters being soulmates, but with character dynamics borrowed from fantasy (werewolf pack structures) superimposed.

<sup>29</sup> The author tag “orphan\_account” on AO3 denotes an author who has unlinked the work from their profile, effectively anonymising it while allowing it to remain in the archive and accessible to users/readers.

constructed emphasises the *who* (“Who are our lovers-to-be?”) and the *why* (“Why is this love story-to-be so special?”); fan fiction, like adaptation, instead emphasises the *how* (“How does this love story-for-the-ages play out this time around?”), because the *who* and the *why* which need to be established in an original work are already known and accepted. The results from comparing our fan fiction corpus to Rousset’s model support this, showing high compliance for elements related to how the connection between the characters is formed (e.g. speech and eye-contact), as well as a majority of entries using a unified structure. For fan fictions this includes the fundamental role of the source itself, which, is constituted by broken up structure for Alec and Magnus’ first meeting. This last observation ties into Kustritz’s claim that fan fiction includes an element of utopian thinking (2016), and that same-sex (slash) fan fiction in particular offers “a romantic ideal based upon equality” (2007, pp. 61-62), which fits nicely with Rousset’s argument that a unified structure predicts that the characters will fall in love at a similar pace (i.e. there will be a measure of equality in the process itself)(Rousset, 1981). An alternate explanation again goes back to Hutcheon (2006) and Van Steenhuyse (2011): a unified structure might simply be more suited for schematic short-cuts and an intertextual reading of the scene.

In conclusion, we note that Rousset’s model and fan fiction are not a perfect partnership. The adaptation and fan elements of fan fiction seem to move fan fiction away from Rousset’s model by changing the focal point of the first meeting between characters from *who* falls in love and *why* (internal reaction and point of change) to *how* the connection happens.

## CONCLUSIONS

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In *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Hutcheon writes:

..... In the workings of the human imagination, adaptation is the norm, not the exception. (p. 177)

The double nature of an adaptation as both product and process has since moved further into online communities who merge their ideas together (McCain, 2015), fill in the gaps they perceive in the original story, and re-create the original narrative together in the form of fan works (Booth, 2009b). In this study, I looked at how adaptation—both traditional and fan created—affects literary models: what happens when narratology, adaptation theory and fan fiction theory intersect. A mixed-method study was performed on a corpus consisting of a novel, its official film and TV-show adaptations, and thirty fan fictions. It combined a surface level quantitative study with qualitative text analysis, using Rousset’s literary model from 1981 on first

meetings as the narratological reference, and the first meeting between the characters Alec Lightwood and Magnus Bane as the text subject.

Based on existing adaptation and fan fiction theory, I expected both the official adaptations and the fan fictions to partly divert from Rousset’s novel-based literary model, e.g. by taking “short-cuts” vis-a-vis the model and exhibiting a wide range of variation in its application. I also expected that fan fictions using a less model-compliant source as their primary inspiration would tend to converge back towards Rousset’s model to a greater extent than fan fiction based on a more compliant source. These theories were partly confirmed: we observed short-cuts in the fan fiction corpus, especially when it came to the setting elements of the model (e.g. how portraits were written); and compliance with the model increased across adaptations (both official and fan fiction), showing a stronger tendency to converge where the source was less compliant. On the other hand, while we observed a lot of variance in the overall setting and plots of the stories, the structure of the first meeting was fairly similar across the corpus.

Finally, I theorised that studying Rousset’s model through an adaptation and fan fiction lens might put the model itself in a new light. While I did note that the adaptation and fan elements of fan fiction seemed to move fan fiction away from Rousset’s model by changing the focal point of the first meeting between characters from *who* falls in love and *why* (internal reaction and point of change) to *how* the connection happens, the corpus studied was too small to draw more general conclusions. Further study is needed to judge whether the convergence of media culture and highly immersive aspects of online fan communities will create a demand for their own literary models or content themselves with moving and adapting existing ones when re-creating a popular narrative.

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## APPENDIX

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Matrix for Evaluating the Corpus against Rousset’s Model

Fan Fiction Corpus



Matrix for scoring compliance with Rousset's model on first meetings

Source	Compliance [1]			Set up (mise en place)					Internal reaction				Staging (mise-en-scène)				Removal of distance				Unified [2]		Narratological structure	
	setting	sating	total	Time [3]	Public [4]	Occasion	Positions [6]	Portrait [7]	Name [8]	Strong/violent [9]	pos/reg [10]	int. change [11]	other	in eyes [12]	in face [13]	in body [14]	other	speech [15]	touch [16]	space [17]	other	R separate [18]	Broken up	other
B [20]	100%	22%	60%	night	yes	party	FTF	yes	yes	-	pos	implied	-	-	-	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
	100%	56%	73%	night	yes	party	FTF	yes	yes	yes (aléc)	pos	unclear	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes (magnus)	-	-	-	yes	-	-
TVA (1) [23]	100%	78%	87%	-	yes	-	Screen	yes	yes	-	unclear	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	yes	-
TVA (2) [24]				night	yes	party	FTB	yes	-	yes (magnus)	pos	unclear	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	yes
TVA (3) [25]	100%	52%	73%	night	-	party/battle	FTB	yes	yes	yes (aléc)	pos	unclear	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	yes	-	yes	-	-
BFF01 [26]				night	yes	party	FTF	yes	-	yes	unclear	-	-	-	-	-	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-	-	yes
BFF02	83%	33%	53%	-	-	-	SBS	yes	-	yes	pos	-	-	-	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
BFF03	83%	88%	87%	night	-	party	BTB	-	yes	yes	pos	-	-	yes	yes	yes	soulmarks	yes	yes	yes	-	yes [27]	-	-
BFF04	83%	67%	73%	night	-	party	FTB	yes	yes	yes	pos	yes	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
BFF05	100%	56%	73%	night	yes	party	FTF	yes	yes	yes	pos	-	-	yes	-	yes	soulmarks	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
BFF06	50%	56%	53%	-	yes	-	FTF	-	yes	-	unclear	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	yes	-	yes	-	-
BFF07	67%	56%	60%	night	yes	party	-	-	yes [28]	yes	pos	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-	-	-
BFF08	50%	56%	53%	-	-	-	FTB	yes	yes	-	pos	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	-
BFF09	67%	88%	80%	-	yes	-	FTB	yes	yes	-	pos	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-
BFF10	50%	67%	60%	night	-	-	FTF	yes	-	yes	neg	-	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	yes [30]	yes	-	-	-
FFF01 [31]	67%	62%	64%	60%	60%	50%	40%	80%	60%	70%	70%	20%	0%	70%	70%	70%	30%	90%	30%	60%	0%	90%	30%	0%
FFF02	100%	88%	93%	night	yes	party	FTB	yes	yes	yes	pos	yes	soulmark	yes	yes	yes	soulmarks	yes	-	yes	-	yes [32]	-	-
FFF03	100%	44%	67%	day	yes	new start	FTB	yes	yes	-	pos	-	-	yes	-	-	-	-	-	yes	-	yes	-	-
FFF04	50%	56%	53%	day	yes	-	FTF	-	-	-	pos	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-	-	yes [33]	-	-
FFF05	67%	87%	67%	night	yes	party	FTB	-	-	yes	pos	yes	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
FFF06	33%	80%	67%	-	-	-	-	yes	yes	yes	pos	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes [34]	-	-
FFF07	33%	11%	20%	-	yes	new start	-	-	-	-	neg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	yes	-	-	-	-
FFF07	67%	67%	20%	-	yes	party	-	yes	-	-	neg	yes	-	-	yes	yes	-	yes	-	yes	-	-	yes	-
FFF08	17%	44%	33%	night	-	-	FTF	-	-	yes	neg	-	-	-	-	-	-	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-
FFF09	50%	56%	53%	night	yes	party	-	-	-	-	neg	yes	-	-	yes	yes	-	yes	-	yes	-	yes [35]	-	-
FFF10	17%	67%	47%	-	-	-	-	-	yes	yes	pos	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-
TVFF01 [36]	53%	59%	57%	40%	70%	40%	20%	40%	40%	50%	60%	40%	10%	60%	70%	50%	10%	80%	20%	80%	0%	40%	20%	0%
TVFF01 [36]	67%	78%	73%	-	-	near death	FTF	yes	yes	yes	neg	healing	-	yes	-	-	magic	yes	yes (magic)	yes	-	-	-	-
TVFF02	100%	88%	93%	day	yes	new start	FTB	yes	yes	yes	pos	yes	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-
TVFF03	67%	88%	80%	day	-	-	FTF	yes	yes	yes	pos	yes	-	yes	yes	-	scent	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-
TVFF04	67%	56%	60%	day	yes	-	FTF	-	yes	unclear	pos	-	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
TVFF05	100%	56%	73%	day	yes	new start	FTF	yes	yes	yes	neg	-	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
TVFF06	50%	100%	73%	-	-	-	FTB	yes	yes	yes	pos	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-
TVFF07	100%	78%	87%	night	yes	party	FTF	yes	yes	yes	pos	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	-	yes	-	-
TVFF08	50%	56%	53%	night	-	-	SBS	yes	-	unclear	neg	-	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
TVFF09	100%	67%	80%	night	yes	party	FTB	yes	yes	yes	unclear	-	-	yes	yes	-	scent	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-
TVFF10	50%	44%	47%	-	yes	-	FTF	-	yes	-	pos	-	-	yes	yes	-	-	yes	-	-	-	yes	-	-
	75%	71%	72%	30%	60%	20%	60%	80%	90%	70%	60%	30%	0%	100%	90%	20%	30%	100%	50%	60%	10%	80%	10%	0%

[1] Compliance is scored on how many of the elements in Rousset's model are present in the source.

Set up = 6 elements  
Staging = 9 elements  
Total: 15 elements

Implied/unclear elements have been scored as not present

[2] All three stages happen in one scene.

[3] Is there a specific time marker in place? if yes, what is this marker? (e.g. "summer", "night", "dawn", "Christmas")

[4] Do they meet in a public place, in the presence of others?

[5] Do they meet at a special occasion? If yes, which type? (e.g. "party", "wedding", "ceremony").

[6] How are they placed at the start of the scene? (e.g. face-to-face, face-to-back)

[7] Is there a physical description that follows portrait conventions?

[8] Do they learn each other's names?

[9] Is the initial reaction described as strong, or even violent? (e.g. shock, hit by lightning, heart racing, feeling faint etc)

[10] Is the initial reaction positive or negative?

[11] Is there a description of the POV character having been changed in some fundamental way/made new by meeting the other character?

[12] Do they communicate through eye-contact?

[13] Do they communicate by facial cues?

[14] Do they communicate by body language?

[15] Do they speak to each other?

[16] Do they touch?

[17] Do they traverse/eliminate the physical space between them? (e.g. moving closer to each other)

[18] Internal reaction (effet) takes place before the first meeting (e.g. character A sees character B and experiences the internal reaction without character B being aware of it)

- [19] Removal of Distance happens in a later scene.
- [20] Book
- [21] Outside POV
- [22] Film adaptation
- [23] TV-show adaptation, Part one - Alec sees Magnus
- [24] TV-show adaptation, part 2 - Magnus sees Alec
- [25] TV-show adaptation, part three, Alec and Malec meet
- [26] Fan fiction based on book, #1
- [27] Soulbond trope: both characters learn each other's names and experience flashes of each other (eyes and near-death-experiences) in dreams before they meet.
- [28] Outside POV
- [29] Characters meet through phone call before meeting face to face.
- [30] "He leaned forward to get a better look at the creature while still maintaining a certain safe distance."
- [31] Fan fiction based on film, #1
- [32] Soulmark activating earlier
- [33] Mistaken identity. strong negative reaction in IR in prior scene. positive reaction at first meeting in person.
- [34] off page
- [35] Alec first sees Magnus in the shape of a dragon.
- [36] Fan fiction based on TV-show, #1
- [37] delayed.

## Search run on: 2018-11-05

Archive: AO3 (<http://www.archiveofourown.org>)

Fandom: all fandoms

Pairing: Magnus Bane/Alec Lightwood

Order by: kudos

Language: English

Exclude tag: Shadowhunters (TV), The Mortal Instruments (Movies)

[illegible]

Fandom(s) listed

iv

Fan fiction based on the movie adaptation

Search run on: 2018-11-05  
Archive: A03 (<http://www.archivedfourown.org>)  
Fandom: all fandoms  
Pairing: Magnus Bane/Alec Lightwood  
Order by: kudos  
Language: English  
Include tag: The Mortal Instruments (Movies)  
Exclude tag: Shadowhunters (TV)  
[https://archivedfourown.org/works?utf8=%E2%9C%93&work\\_search%5Bsort\\_column%5D=kudos\\_count&include\\_work\\_search%5Bfandom\\_ids%5D=%5B%5D=8281474&work\\_search%5Bother\\_tag\\_names%5D=&exclude\\_work\\_search%5Bfandom\\_ids%5D%5B%5D=6566609&work\\_search%5Bexclude\\_tag\\_names%5D=&work\\_search%5Bcrossover%5D=&work\\_search%5Bcompletes%5D=&work\\_search%5Bwords\\_from%5D=&work\\_search%5Bwords\\_to%5D=&work\\_search%5Bdate\\_from%5D=&work\\_search%5Bdate\\_to%5D=&work\\_search%5Bquery%5D=&work\\_search%5Blanguage\\_id%5D=1&commit=Sort+and+Filter&tag\\_id=Magnus+Bane+Alec+Lightwood](https://archivedfourown.org/works?utf8=%E2%9C%93&work_search%5Bsort_column%5D=kudos_count&include_work_search%5Bfandom_ids%5D=%5B%5D=8281474&work_search%5Bother_tag_names%5D=&exclude_work_search%5Bfandom_ids%5D%5B%5D=6566609&work_search%5Bexclude_tag_names%5D=&work_search%5Bcrossover%5D=&work_search%5Bcompletes%5D=&work_search%5Bwords_from%5D=&work_search%5Bwords_to%5D=&work_search%5Bdate_from%5D=&work_search%5Bdate_to%5D=&work_search%5Bquery%5D=&work_search%5Blanguage_id%5D=1&commit=Sort+and+Filter&tag_id=Magnus+Bane+Alec+Lightwood)  
Total no. of works: 52

Listing	Title	Author	URL	Publication date	Fandom(s) listed				Length	Corpus	Comment
					Books	Film	TV-show	AU			
1	Black and Blue	SwampyGreenie								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
2	Blood Doesn't Always Mean Family	TheMortalMalecFan								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
3	These Things Don't Just Happen	SwampyGreenie								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
4	The Magnus Effect	JustNef	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/77291933/c">https://archivedfourown.org/works/77291933/c</a>	2016-06-24	x	x			< 10K	FFF01	
5	White As A Marble	Undertiespellofmalec	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/15176942/">https://archivedfourown.org/works/15176942/</a>	2018-07-05	x	x		x	10-25K	FFF02	
6	MAGnificent Mornings	Wordsmith16								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
7	Honey, It's Your Turn	Astoria Gracewell								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
8	The Heart Inside	MerielTLA	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/31111128/c">https://archivedfourown.org/works/31111128/c</a>	2015-01-04		x		x	10-25K	FFF03	
9	Smile at the Camera	Jess_Love								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
10	Monsters Stuck in Your Head	enjoirascore								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
11	Thank You	divemartini								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
12	I'm Guessing It's 'I Love You Too'?	Jimbee								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
13	The Unthinkable	Wordsmith16								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
14	The Grey Skies Above	orphan_account	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/70690936">https://archivedfourown.org/works/70690936</a>	2016-06-02	x	x			< 10K	FFF04	
15	Knowledge is a Powerful Thing	Itsakainething								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
16	And You Know I See Right through You Cause	thesassmaster								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
17	Call Me	divemartini								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
18	Drawn to an Angel	Xenahime92								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
19	First Anniversary	Wordsmith16								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
20	Magnus Heals Alec	orphan_account								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
21	My Alexander	orphan_account								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
22	Panty Raid	SarcasticOnion	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/8305855">https://archivedfourown.org/works/8305855</a>	2016-10-17	x	x		x	< 10K	FFF05	
23	The Way that the Years Pass	caramel_kisses								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
24	Birthday	marathesayu								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
25	How to Save a Life	fandomizedWatson								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
26	Reminiscing	BlueShadow75								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
27	My Best Friend's Wedding	parabatishum	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/8616754">https://archivedfourown.org/works/8616754</a>	2016-11-24		x			< 10K	FFF06	
28	The Same Battle (mortal instruments x superna	CodC17								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
29	Will You, Alec?	fandomizedWatson								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
30	Give Me Your Strength	iisinrovert								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
31	All Things Lost - Raziel's Gift	DPR								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
32	Family/Issues and Soothing Heartbeats	KarenHkari								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
33	I'll Comfort You, Even in the Worst of Times	sallyassbltch								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
34	Connetion	GeoToni								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
35	Blurred Faces	SwampyGreenie	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/6196204/c">https://archivedfourown.org/works/6196204/c</a>	2016-03-18	x	x			< 10K	FFF07	
36	Malec: Truth or Dare	Supernaturalpatterholmes								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
37	Cute and Deadly	GothicFairy								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
38	Can I Keep You?	Ooe_Indominus	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/6504316/c">https://archivedfourown.org/works/6504316/c</a>	2016-04-09	x	x		x	< 10K	FFF08	
39	His Special Key	malesweety	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/15692881">https://archivedfourown.org/works/15692881</a>	2018-08-14	x	x		x	< 10K	FFF09	
40	Percy Jackson and the Mortal Cup	Forever_22	<a href="https://archivedfourown.org/works/6434479/c">https://archivedfourown.org/works/6434479/c</a>	2016-04-02	x	x		x	< 10K	Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting
41	Desire	ismegianonthemoon								FFF10	

Fan fiction based on the TV-show adaptation

Search run on: 2018-09-13  
Archive: AO3 (<http://www.archiveofourown.org>)  
Fandom: all fandoms  
Pairing: Magnus Bane/Alec Lightwood  
Order by: kudos  
Language: English  
Date from: 2016-02-12  
[https://archiveofourown.org/works?utf8=%E2%9C%93&work\\_search%5Bsort\\_column%5D=kudos\\_count&work\\_search%5Bsort\\_tag\\_names%5D=&work\\_search%5Bexcluded\\_tag\\_names%5D=&work\\_search%5Bgrossover%5D=&work\\_search%5Bcomplete%5D=&work\\_search%5Bwords\\_from%5D=&work\\_search%5Bwords\\_to%5D=&work\\_search%5Bdate\\_from%5D=2016-02-12&work\\_search%5Bdate\\_to%5D=&work\\_search%5Bquery%5D=&work\\_search%5Blanguage\\_id%5D=1&commit=Sort+and+Filter&tag\\_id=Magnus+Bane's+Alec+Lightwood](https://archiveofourown.org/works?utf8=%E2%9C%93&work_search%5Bsort_column%5D=kudos_count&work_search%5Bsort_tag_names%5D=&work_search%5Bexcluded_tag_names%5D=&work_search%5Bgrossover%5D=&work_search%5Bcomplete%5D=&work_search%5Bwords_from%5D=&work_search%5Bwords_to%5D=&work_search%5Bdate_from%5D=2016-02-12&work_search%5Bdate_to%5D=&work_search%5Bquery%5D=&work_search%5Blanguage_id%5D=1&commit=Sort+and+Filter&tag_id=Magnus+Bane's+Alec+Lightwood)  
Total no. of works: 15 530

Listing	Title	Author	URL	Publication date	Fandom(s) listed					Length	Corpus	Comment
					Books	Film	TV-show	AU				
1	Fall Without Wings	notcrypticbutcoy	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/97800986">https://archiveofourown.org/works/97800986</a>	2017-02-06			x		> 100K	TVFF01		
2	Magnus Bane's School for Young Warlocks	Insomniak	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6637078">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6637078</a>	2016-04-13	x		x		> 100K	TVFF02		
3	All Things Shadowhunters	klitkat								Rejected	588 individual stories published as one work, multiple pairings.	
4	Pro Bono	sarcasticfluency								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting	
5	Setting Fire to a Stone	KouriArashi	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/7890166">https://archiveofourown.org/works/7890166</a>	2016-08-28			x	x	25-50K	TVFF03		
6	A Fighting Chance	heartdesires456	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6820201">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6820201</a>	2016-05-11			x	x	50-75K	TVFF04		
7	In the Sin Bin	otppurefuckingmagic	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6478579">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6478579</a>	2016-04-06			x	x	> 100K	TVFF05		
8	Anything You Say	milominderbinder	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6157942">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6157942</a>	2016-03-04	x		x	x	75-100K	TVFF06		
9	Wrong In the Dark	sarcasticfluency								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting	
10	And the Oscar Goes To...	Lecrit								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting	
11	Cathedrals	KarasuYurei, KouriArashi								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting, author already in corpus	
12	One Show Only	KouriArashi								Rejected	Author already in corpus	
13	Strange Love	arandomfan91								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting	
14	Hath No Fury	SilverMirror12								Rejected	Story does not contain a first meeting	
15	Magnus, How Long Have You Been Twenty?	Master of Unlocking	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6147298">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6147298</a>	2016-03-02	x		x		< 10K	TVFF07		
16	Set Me in Motion	lemonoclefox	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6743893">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6743893</a>	2016-05-04			x	x	>100K	TVFF08		
17	Don't Look at Me	petx	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/11030175">https://archiveofourown.org/works/11030175</a>	2017-05-29			x	x	75-100K	TVFF09		
18	Internet Famous	kuro1ne2kun	<a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/6337447">https://archiveofourown.org/works/6337447</a>	2016-03-24	x		x	x	75-100K	TVFF10		